



Vol. 1 Issue 1

ACTIVE Newsletter



March 2004

Greetings!

Frustration may be the best word to describe the way the crew feels about our successful patrol. It certainly has not been from a lack of excitement. We have enjoyed a very productive deployment, filled with action and terrific results. Although ACTIVE has achieved many impressive accomplishments, we have not been able to brag about it due to operational security requirements.

As you read this, we are steaming hard towards home with images of loved ones in our heads. Our adventures have taken us to El Salvador, Guatemala and the waters of the eastern Pacific Ocean. Our successes include strengthening the bond between the U.S. and these two Central American countries, qualifying numerous crewmembers at their watch stations, rescuing 109 migrants from the perils of the high seas and interdicting two drug smuggling vessels.

We hope this letter finds you well and excited about our return. The ship is full of pride knowing we have done our jobs well. The support of families and friends has kept our spirits high and motivation strong. Please enjoy the highlights of our efforts during this exciting patrol.



USCGC ACTIVE

Motor Vessel DOROMINIO

After several long weeks of patrol we pulled into Acajutla, El Salvador (get your atlas out everyone) for a well deserved and much needed break. Crewmembers took advantage of arranged morale events, enjoying some time on dry land and relaxing. We all know there is a possibility of being recalled during our port calls. Sure enough, duty called! Upon receipt of direction from higher authority, the word was sent out to the crew to return to the ship as soon as possible.

Within hours of the recall, ACTIVE was underway and headed for the last known location of a vessel in distress on the high seas. USCGC TYBEE, working with us during this patrol, was also recalled to assist with searching for the vessel along with several aircraft. After 24 hours of exhaustive searching, TYBEE thankfully located the disabled motor vessel DOROMINIO.

While the story of DOROMINIO is sad, the courage and devotion to duty displayed by ACTIVE put the Coast Guard's humanitarian mission in the spotlight. 109 migrants, including a pregnant woman, were found on the 40-foot boat. The migrants paid between \$100-\$5000 and departed Ecuador nine days earlier with dreams of eventually reaching the U.S. Five days into their voyage, the vessel broke down and the food and water supplies were exhausted. The master and crew deserted the boat, leaving the 109 migrants disabled and adrift to fend for themselves. They had been without food and water for three days when we arrived.



109 Migrants Onboard ACTIVE

ACTIVE gave 110 percent effort to ensure the migrants were safe. We methodically transferred them to ACTIVE from their unseaworthy vessel and provided them with food, water, blankets and critical medical attention. We stood around the clock watches over them and delivered them safely to another CG cutter. It was an enormous task requiring sacrifices by all, yet there was not a single complaint heard throughout the ship. Our mission was clear and the crew pulled through with incredible endurance and compassion to make it a huge success.

Go-Fast Case

ACTIVE was selected to be the first 210' on the west coast to deploy with the HH-68 helicopter. The HH-68 is the Coast Guard's only armed helicopter, specifically designed to stop Go-Fast vessels from smuggling drugs into our country. This helicopter arrived mid way through the patrol from a 378' cutter that had to return home due to engine problems. The crew spent a long rigorous weekend of training to meet strict qualification standards for operating with the HH-68. All the hard work the crew put forth in a very short period was about to pay off with a successful drug interdiction case.



Go Fast Vessels

On Friday, the 20th of February, CGC MIDGETT boarded a fishing vessel loaded with more than five tons of cocaine with a street value of over \$98M. The boarding team overheard communications that led them to believe there were other vessels operating in the area looking to pick up the drugs. MIDGETT launched her helicopter and located two Go-Fast vessels in the area. A fixed wing aircraft monitored the position of the Go-Fasts and vectored ACTIVE and TYBEE to the scene. ACTIVE quickly intercepted the Go-Fast vessels and launched the HH-68 armed helicopter and our boarding teams. As advertised, the HH-68 disabled the engines of one Go-Fast vessel with a .50 caliber sniper rifle. The other vessel wisely decided to stop before being fired upon.



CG HH-68

Soon after the helicopter stopped the vessels, our boarding team arrived and detained the six individuals for questioning. Our job was to establish a link between the Go-Fast vessels and the vessel that was carrying the cocaine. We knew the Go-Fasts were intending to make a pick up but we had to prove it.

Our two Spanish speakers worked tirelessly, questioning the Go-Fast crews about their intentions. Finally, the crew admitted they were there associated with the drug laden fishing vessel and our case was made. We transferred the six Go-Fast crewmembers and the evidence we compiled over to another Coast Guard cutter and returned to Guatemala to refuel and take a much-needed break.

Swim Call

All work and no play equals bad juju. With the temperatures nearing the 90's, the ocean two miles deep and the sea as calm as could be, we brought the engines to "all stop" and went for a swim!

Jumping from the forecastle isn't as easy as it looks. Many attempted some pretty fancy dives, trying to impress their shipmates, but were met by painful red marks, sore backs and chests. We saw all kinds of cannon balls, can openers and even some one and a quarter flips. MK2 Barratt displayed the finest sense of self-control and craziness with a perfect belly flop. He did not flinch a muscle as he leapt, parallel to the deck, accelerating to 25 mph and smacking the water belly first with a very loud thud! We won't talk about his questionable judgment.

Although we planned to conduct several swim calls throughout the patrol, our operational mission kept us very busy and allowed us the opportunity only once. It was a great morale boost for the crew and gave us a chance to show off our pearly white, Pacific Northwest bodies to the creatures of the ocean.



Diving off the fore'sle

Heading Home

The time we have all been waiting for is upon us. We are headed home! While the rough waters of the Pacific Northwest are on the horizon, we are happy to see them as it means this long patrol is almost over. We all have our reasons for wanting to return to homeport. Many of us are missing loved ones and family. Some of us are eager to sit in the comfort of our homes and watch ESPN. Others just want to get back to dry land where the water won't make you sick and everybody speaks English. Whatever the reason we are all eager to return to Port Angeles. We have survived another long patrol and we are proud knowing we are serving our country well, saving lives, protecting America and keeping drugs out of the hands of our children. Great job ACTIVE!



ACTIVE sailing off into the sunset